UNITED STATES ARMY CHAPLAIN CENTER AND SCHOOL
FORT HAMILTON, NEW YORK 11209

CHAPLAIN OFFICER ADVANCED COURSE (74-1)
CLASS C-22

TECHNIQUES OF RESEARCH

RESEARCH PROJECT

"GLOSSOLALIA AND THE HUMAN PERSONALITY"

CHAPLAIN (MAJOR) JOSEPH L.F. HUSETH

3 DECEMBER 1973

PREFACE

My originally assigned project was to take the Operational Reports Lessons Learned (ORLL) from Vietnam and synthesize them into a meaningful study. I was to provide a digest of significant concepts for future chaplain utilization in a similar environment.

I spent six weeks running down dead-end leads in trying to get hold of these reports. I contacted the last USARV Chaplain, Chaplain (COL) Kapusta; the President of the Chaplain's Board, Chaplain (COL) Hope; the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; the Logistic Center, Fort Lee, Virginia; the Office of the Post Chaplain, Fort Myer, Virginia; The Office of the Chief of Chaplains and all departments at the United States Army Chaplain Center and School, Fort Hamilton, New York. The closest I came to finding any of these reports was at the Defense Documents Center, Washington, D.C. The reports for FY 68 and 69 are on file there. The problem is that they are still classified.

At the end of these six weeks of frustration, during which I was in constant touch with my research point of contact, Chaplain Grubb, and with Chaplain Saylor, Chief of the Office of Doctrine, Development, Literature and Plans at USACHCS, I requested that my assigned topic be changed. I also proposed an alternate. This proposal was approved by Chaplain Saylor and Chaplain Grubb and is the subject of this paper.

Matterial for this paper is from the attached Bibliography and from personal experience during the past twenty years. This experience includes eleven years as a civilian parish pastor in South Dakota, Denver, Colorado, and Los Angeles, California, and eight years as a troop and dependent chaplain of the United States Army, both in CONUS and overseas.

ASSIGNED PROJECT

RELEVANCE

Chaplains are charged with staff responsibility for recognizing the religious needs of persons of all faiths and providing for those needs within the limitations of available resources. A growing number of persons in every command are becoming involved with the glossolalia movement. To work with these people in a harmonious way, the chaplain must understand this phenomenon and the people who are involved in the movement.

OBJECTIVE

Determine, if possible, any correlation between personality type and the individuals involved in the glossolalia movement. Propose what all chaplains ought to know about speaking in tongues to make them better able to understand and minister to the glossolalist.

FORWARD

Throughout the years of my ministry, both as a civilian parish pastor and as an army chaplain, I have come to the conviction that there is a definite correlation between a person's personality make-up and the church denomination of which he is a part. That is to say, people who are more outwardly demonstrative with their emotions tend to gravitate toward the denominations which practice a more emotional approach to their expression of worship and faith. Those who are less inclined to show their emotions outwardly are drawn more toward the liturgical approach to worship and faith.

For many years I have been interested in the phenomenon of glossolalia. This interest results from my acquaintance and experience with various glossolalists during my ministry, both in the civilian parish and the military community. The thought

The thought occurs to me - assuming there is a correlation between the type of personality an individual possesses and the denomination of which he is a part - is there also a connection between the type of personality and the expression of one's faith through the speaking in tongues?

This is the subject of this paper.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE i

ASSIGNED PROJECT iii

FORWARD iv

INTRODUCTION 1

I. FIVE CURRENT THEORIES OF GLOSSOLALIA . . 3

LAURENCE CHRISTENSON 3

ANTHONY A. HOEKEMA 3

MORTON T. KELSEY 4

JOHN L. SHERRILL 5

WAYNE E. OATES 6

II. RESULTS OF THE QUALBEN-KILDAHL RESEARCH . 7

III. PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS IN THE GLOSSOLALIA EXPERIENCE 9

ANXIETY 9

REGRESSION 9

MATURITY 9

THE MAGICAL QUALITY 10

THE PLACE OF THE IRRATIONAL 10

FEELINGS OF UNWORTHINESS 10

IV. SUMMARY 12

V. CONCLUSION 13

VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY 15

INTRODUCTION

It is only in the last ten to twelve years that glossolalia, or speaking in tongues, has become what might be called "respectable." Prior to this time it was confined almost entirely to a few extreem and theologically conservative religious sects. But in the late fifties and early sixties, this phenomenon came of age. Its practice began to appear within some of the mainline Protestant churchs and also within the Roman Catholic Church. Among the more notable Protestant churchs within which it has increasingly found are the Episcopal, Lutheran and Presbyterian congregations. It is not easy to dismiss it as just another peculiar form of religious extremism. The very respectability of those who now speak in tongues and the quiet way in which they are doing it eliminates that attitude.

Along about the mid-sixties clergymen and behavioral scientists undertook to examine this phenomenon in depth. Many heated theological discussions resulted. In 1971 a report was completed on the research conducted by Dr. Paul A. Qualben, a medical doctor and psychiatrist, and Dr. John P. Kildahl, a clergyman of The American Lutheran Church. Their research was made possible by a grant from the Behavioral Sciences Research Branch of the National Institute of Mental Health, Bethesda, Maryland.

After their report was completed, Dr. Qualben and Dr.

Kildahl were convinced that more work needed to be done. They therefore devised a follow-up, independent, research program. In writing this paper I have drawn heavily on the results of this research.

I. FIVE CURRENT THEORIES OF GLOSSOLALIA

LAURENCE CHRISTENSON

Larry Christenson is a personal friend of mine. In fact, I participated in his ordination service in Denver, Colorado, in 1959. In his book, Speaking In Tongues, he states that this phenomenon is a totally spiritual experience. He believes that it "involves a supernatural manifestation of the Holy Spirit which is clearly spoken of in the Bible."[1] He is very critical of those who down-grade speaking in tongues as a fad or as mere emotionalism. He sees it as a "gift of the spirit" which has resulted in the rebirth of faith for many. It is to him an act of "worship and adoration." He does not consider a glossolalist as being either "hysterical" or "ecstatic".

ANTHONY A. HOEKEMA

Anthony A. Hoekema si the professor of systematic theology at Calvin Theological Seminary. Though he does not believe that speaking in tongues is divinely inspired, he does believe that there is much value in the experience. Because it is not always a religious experience and arises in a variety of individuals subjected to strongly repressed emotional forces, Hoekema is

---

[1]Laurence Christenson, Speaking In Tongues (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Publishers, 1968), p.18.

inclined to view it as a psychological phenomenon which is readily produced and easily understood. He does admit, however, that a tongue speaking experience can be a source of real spiritual blessing and of a resurgence of faith. This he attributes, not to the glossolalia as such, but rather to the state of mind and the spiritual disciplines which have preceeded the experience.[2]

MORTON T. KELSEY

Morton T. Kelsey, rector (in 1961) of St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Monrovia, California, states that his research clearly shows glossolalia to be different in both kind and quality from either an ecstatic, hysterical experience or an innocuous release of strong religious emotions. He discusses five views of glossolalia as a psychologically caused phenomenon:

1. A manifestation of schizophrenia
2. A form of hysteria
3. A result of hypnotism
4. A case of autosuggestion
5. An exalted memory based on repression[3]

Kelsey disagrees with the first view because the tongue-speaker does not suffer any damage to his ego and remains clearly able to differentiate between reality and unreality.

---

[2]Anthony A. Hoekema, What About Tongue Speaking? (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), p. 135.

[3]Morton T. Kelsey, Tongue Speaking: An Experiment in Spiritual Experience (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1968), p. 210

He disagrees with the second view because, while recognizing that both hysteria and tongue-speaking obviously arise from the unconscious, he sees no other connection between them.

In regard to the third view, Kelsey recognizes that both hypnotism and tongue-speaking can open the mind to the unconscious. Yet here, he says, the likeness ends.

The theory that glossolalia is a form of autosuggestion (fourth view) he dismisses entirely, for, as he says, it is extremely doubtful that an individual can "autosuggest himself into a transforming religious experience."[4]

As for view number five, the exalted memory, Kelsey feels it offers no explanation as to what might trigger the experience. Glossolalia, according to Kelsey, is a significant psychological and religious phenomenon best understood in relation to Jung's theory of the collective unconscious.

JOHN L. SHERRIL

John L. Sherrill, a reporter and writer on the staff of Guideposts magazine, views glossolalia in a purely religious context. Though he does not advance any psychological explanations for the tongues-speaking phenomenon, still the language he uses closely parallels the psychological explanations of other writers. He empasizes that he believes that glossolalia is a gift of the Holy Spirit. He is interested in what he calls the "group mind." He believes that "intimate, sustaining group-

---

[4]Ibid., p.211.

fellowship" is a distinguishing feature of glossolalia.[5]

WAYNE E. OATES

Wayne E. Oates, a professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, feels it is impossible to make any generalizations as to the mental health of glossolalists. He does suggest, however, that glossolalia is "a childlike form of language."[6] The toddler repeats sounds that are meaningless to the listener but satisfying to the child. He does not make sense in his speech, but is stimulated by the presence of another person who is neither included in the monologue nor expected to respond to it. This, Oates believes, accurately describes the phenomenon of tongue-speaking. Oates believes it is a breakthrough of deeply felt but long pent-up passions which find expression in sounds unintelligible to the listener but meaningful to the speaker. He asserts that tongue-speakers tend to have weak egos, confused identities, high anxiety levels, and generally unstable personalities. He feels that speaking in tongues allows the psychically ill to communicate their deep and too-long-repressed religious emotions in a socially acceptable form.

---

[5]John L. Sherril, They Speak With Other Tongues (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1964),

[6]Wayne E. Oates, "A Socio-Psychological Study of Glossolalia," in Frank Stagg, E. Glenn Hinson, and Wayne E. Oates, Glossolalia: Tongue Speaking In Biblical, Historical, and Psychological Perspective (New York and Nashville: Abington Press, 1967), p. 78.

II. RESULTS OF THE QUALBEN-KILDAHL RESEARCH

Dr. Paul A. Qualben and Dr. John P. Kildahl interviewed in depth and gave psychological tests to twenty glossolalists and twenty nonglossolalists. All the subjects were active members of mainline Protestant congregations. They were very carefully selected to be equated by religious sincerity, religious interest and activity, age, sex, marital status and educational level. They were each evaluated on the basis of:

1. A structured psychiatric interview
2. Four psychological tests
3. A recording of the individuals tongue-speaking

Results of this research project indicate:

1. That glossolalists are more submissive, suggestible and dependent in the presence of authority figures than non-tongue-speakers

2. They always thought about some benevolent authority person when they began to speak in tongues

3. That glossolalists feel better about themselves after speaking in tongues[7]

This reported feeling of well-being was greater than for

---

[7]John P. Kildahl, The Psychology Of Speaking In Tongues (New York, Evanston, San Francisco, London: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1972), pp. 40-41.

the control group which did not speak in tongues. The study, however, produced conclusive evidence that these benefits were dependent upon acceptance by the leader and other members of a tongue-speaking group rather than upon the actual experience of speaking in tongues itself. Without regular buoying up from others, the frequency and meaning of the tongue-speakers experience diminished.[8]

---

[8]Ibid. p. 55-56.

III. PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS IN THE GLOSSOLALIA E EXPERIENCE

There appears to be some significant psychological and/or emotional differences between tongue-speakers and non-tongue-speakers.

ANXIETY

Through careful interviewing, Dr. Qualben learned that 85% of the tongue-speakers had experienced a clearly defined anxiety crisis preceding their speaking in tongues. Only 30% of the control group had experienced similar anxiety crises. It was also observed that the very experience of learning to speak in tongues generated anxiety.

REGRESSION

A psychological regression was another emotional factor observed in the tongue-speaker. By this is meant a reversion to an earlier level of maturity. During this regression the rational, commonsense, ego-controlled way of relating to life is somehow diminished. One becomes "more childlike, less critical in nature." The critical faculties are subdued. Without exposure to a regressive group experience, tongue-speaking could not be induced.

MATURITY

Though people of all levels of maturity are involved in

the tongues movement, those with a low level of emotional stability tend to be extreem in their affirmation of the benefits of glossolalia. Some were "psychologivally in a similar condition to those who have an obsessive fantasy regarding numbers, or a hand-washing compulsion."[9] Some claimed unusual gifts and often "were not amenable to reasonable discussion with other people."[10]

THE MAGICAL QUALITY

All tongue-speakers entertained a certain magical notion of what glossolalia meant. The term magical was defined by the belief that God controlled and directed believers' lives in a "mechanistic way."[11]

THE PLACE OF THE IRRATIONAL

Closely tied to the magical is the irrational quality with which many tongue-speakers invested their experience. It was irrational in the sense that "the speakers did not attempt to conceptualize or understand it within the framework of their usual world."[12] They said the experience was impossible to to confirm scientifically because it was a private matter and it's claims could neither be proven or disproven.

FEELINGS OF WORTHLESSNESS

A sense of worthlessness invariably went along with the onset of speaking in tongues. This feeling often had the marks of typical depression. They, however, were not the same as guilt

---

[9]Ibid., p.59 [10]Ibid., p.60 [11]Ibid., p.60 [12]Ibid., p.61

feelings, according to Dr. Kildahl, and were usually not attached to specific acts or deeds. They were simply a "total sense of nothingness and worthlessness."[13]

---

[13]Ibid., p. 64.

IV. SUMMARY

Many books have been written and a considerable amount of research has been conducted concerning the phenomenon called glossolalia or speaking in tongues. The most careful and significant research, in my opinion, has been done and is continuing to be done by Dr. Qualben and Dr. Kildahl. To paraphrase briefly the results of their research the following indications emerge.

1. Glossolalists are neither more nor less emotionally disturbed than equally religious non-tongue-speakers.

2. They appear to have a pronounced dependency on an authority figure who is regarded as being benevolent.

3. They appear to have a prior need for acceptance by a group and by God.

4. Once the ability to speak in tongues is achieved, a feeling of relaxation and euphoria follows.

5. This feeling is accompanied by one of having found oneself and of having found a home in the company of other tongue-speakers.

V. CONCLUSIONS

It appears to me that the evidence does support my initial theory that there is a correlation between personality type and the individuals who are involved in glossolalia or speaking in tongues. People who practice glossolalia tend to be more submissive, suggestible, and dependent in the presence of an authority figure than those who do not.

As a Christian, I do not dispute the claim that speaking in tongues is a gift of God. I believe this very sincerely. I also believe that God gives this gift, as He does other special gifts, to those whom He chooses. (1 Corinthians 12:11) Because this is true, to me it logically follows that the gift of speaking in tongues is given to individuals whose psychological and emotional make-up is such that it will serve to their immediate and lasting benefit.

It is important that we chaplains, who must relate to and work with glossolalists, recognize this. Glossolalists are not "strange" people to be avoided or ignored or ostracized. They are sincere christians who, because of their particular needs, have been given a special gift by God. And regardless of whether or not we agree with some of their theology, we must love them, accept them as brothers in Christ, and seek to minister to their spiritual needs. Granted, this is not always easy. But, by God's

grace and power and our conscientious effort to understand and to serve them, we can also be their pastor.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Christenson, Laurence, Speaking In Tongues. Minneapolis: Bethany;Fellowship, Publishers, 1968.

Ervin, Howard M., These Are Not Drunken As Ye Suppose. Plainfield, New Jersey: Logos International, 1968.

Freeman, Dr. Hobart E., Why Speak In Tongues? Claypool, Indiana: Faith Publications.

Hoekema, Anthony A., What About Tongue-Speaking? Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966.

Kelsey, Morton T., Tongue Speaking: An Experiment In Spiritual Experience. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1964.

Kildahl, John P., The Psychology Of Speaking In Tongues. New York, Evanston, San Francisco, London: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1972.

Mills, Watson, Understanding Speaking In Tongues. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972.

Rea, John, The Layman's Commentary On The Holy Spirit. Plainfield, New Jersey: Logos International, 1972.

Sherrill, John L., They Speak With Other Tongues. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1964.

Stagg, Frank; Hinson, E. Glenn; and Oates, Wayne E., Glossolalia: Tongue Speaking In Biblical, Historical, and Psychological Perspective. Nashville and New York: Abingdon Press, 1967.